



DECEMBER 2015



LARAMIE REGION

“Conserving Wildlife - Serving People”



## Program grads harvest first elk



Two recent graduates from the Forever Wild Families program in Laramie harvested their first-ever elk this year!

Fourteen-year-old Calvin Webb shot a young cow in Hunt Area 7. Calvin was joined by North Laramie Game Warden Kelly Todd and Hunter Management Coordinator Sterling Spilinek, who taught the young man many new skills throughout the day.

Jordan Martin of Cheyenne also drew an Area 7 elk license and, with a little help from Wildlife and Habitat Management Supervisor Ian Tator, successfully harvested a nice cow. Congratulations to both of these new hunters.



# Law Enforcement

## Hunters cited for illegal ATV use

Medicine Bow Game Warden Jake Kettley responded to a call about a couple of banned ATVs on the Pinto Creek Hunter Management Area. When he arrived, Warden Kettley noticed ATV tracks going through the small walk-through gate so he waited for the hunters to return to their pickup truck.

The two California men eventually returned and had to take their ATVs back through the gate to get to their truck. The ATVs barely fit through the gate and they had to remove their mounted rifles to make it through.

Warden Kettley cited both hunters for having ATVs on the Hunter Management Area, and issued them warnings for failure to display permission slips. One man was also cited for failing to tag his harvested animal, and the other man received a warning for the same violation.



## Errant shot results in over limit of elk



Access Coordinator Jason Sherwood said a man hunting a remote portion of the Bell Otte Hunter Management Area called to report himself for killing two elk with one bullet.

Despite being on a satellite phone, the call dropped, but Coordinator Sherwood was able to locate the man's vehicle and later met with him and his son.

They went to the kill site and Sherwood helped them finish quartering and packing out the two elk the man shot, and an elk his son harvested.

The man's bullet had passed through the vital area of the first cow, and appeared to then have gone through the neck of a second cow, which was most likely standing slightly behind the first animal with her head down. Both elk fell within a few feet of each other.

The man was cited for taking an over limit of elk, but Coordinator Sherwood appeared in court on his behalf and the entire fine was deferred, pending a one year probation period with no other law violations.



## Warden catches anglers snagging salmon

South Laramie Game Warden Bill Brinegar had been checking hunters in area 45 west of town when he decided to check anglers at the Plains Lakes.

At the Lake Hattie dam, he noticed several young men fishing in the outlet. It didn't take long to figure out they were trying to snag kokanee salmon. The men were visiting from out of state and never looked at the fishing regulations to learn that snagging salmon is illegal.

Warden Brinegar issued one warning and one citation for snagging kokanee. He said these weren't the first or the last anglers to take advantage of the vulnerable prey.

At a later date, Brinegar again watched a group of anglers snag kokanee at the same location. The men, who were from Laramie County, all had licenses but never read the fishing regulations. Besides snagging the kokanee, one man also had an over limit of fish. Brinegar issued several citations and warnings to the men.

## Permission needed to hunt Foote Access Area

Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton reported that a white-tail deer was taken without permission at the Foote Public Access area north of Saratoga.

White-tail deer seasons continue through November and December in the upper Platte River Valley for the few lucky people that drew limited quota licenses. However, finding hunting access for white-tails is challenging.

On Nov. 14 an employee of the 5N Ranch near Saratoga observed a hunter loading a freshly killed deer into his vehicle at the entrance to the parking area at the Foote Public Access Area. The ranch employee contacted Warden Burton.

Because the easement for the Foote Access Area only allows fishing and boating access within 50 feet of the river, permission must be obtained from the owner of the property to hunt on the Foote Access Area.



## Opening weekend pheasant harvest down from long-term average

Wheatland Wildlife Biologist Martin Hicks said opening weekend of the general pheasant season saw an increase in wild bird harvest, but overall harvest (pen-raised and wild pheasant harvest) was still below the long-term average.

However, he stresses the importance of the Springer Wildlife Habitat Management Area for hunting opportunity. Hicks said 79 percent of the pheasant harvest reported at check stations on opening weekend came from the Springer WHMA.

# Mountain lion freed from trap, released



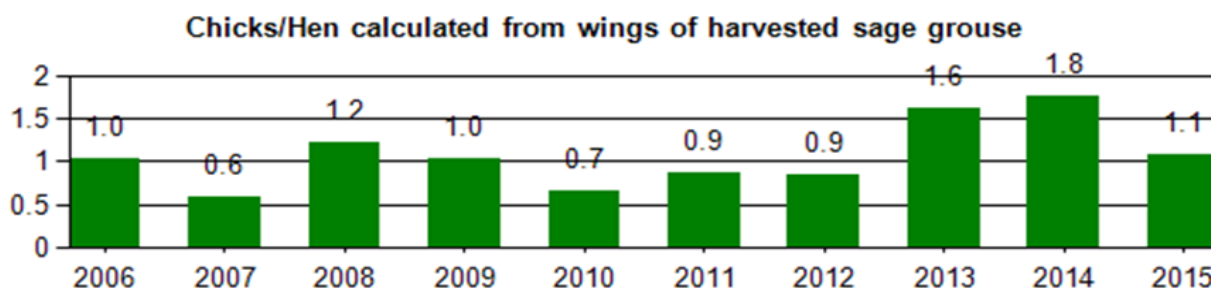
Wheatland Wildlife Biologist Martin Hicks, Medicine Bow Game Warden Jake Kettley and North Laramie Game Warden Kelly Todd went up to the Tunnel Road area to release a mountain lion that a trapper had accidentally caught in a leg hold trap.

After its release, the young cat recovered and was gone within an hour. Biologist Hicks put an ear tag in the right ear just in case we ended up catching her again in the future.

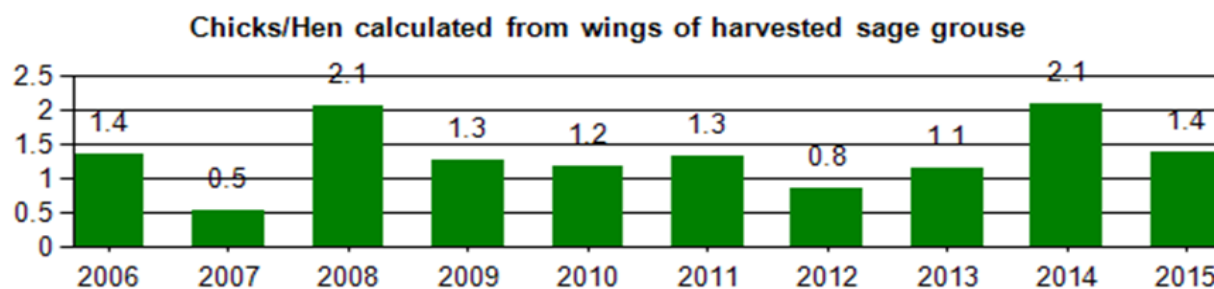


# 2015 Greater Sage-Grouse Wing Bee results

## Bates Hole/Shirley Basin Management Area



## South Central Management Area



Biologists recently conducted the annual sage-grouse "Wing Bee." During a wing-bee, biologists determine sex and age of sage-grouse wings that were collected from hunters during the hunting season.

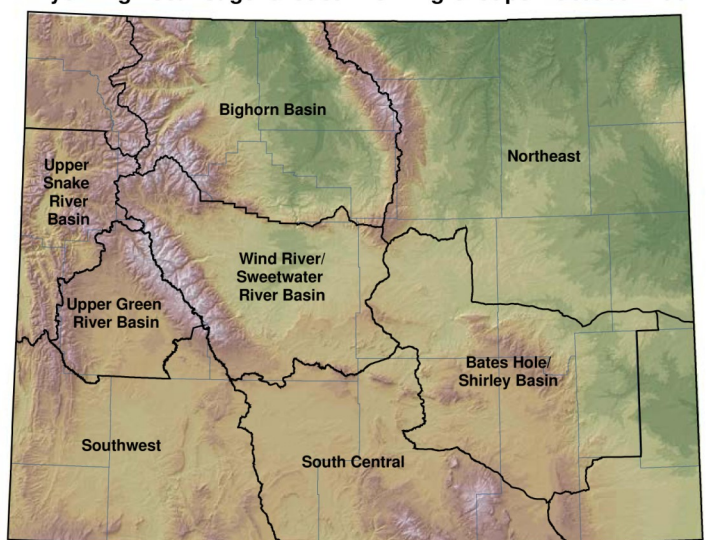
The information is used to evaluate the trend for annual chick survival. Generally, more chick wings in the harvest equals better production and survival rates in the field. Statewide analyses of wing data have suggested chick-per-hen ratios of 1.4-1.7 typically results in relatively stable populations for sage-grouse.

The 2015 chick survival appeared to be down slightly from the notably high rate observed in 2014. However, overall sage-grouse numbers had improved across Wyoming because of the higher survival rate observed last year.

The graphs above show the results for the management areas in the Laramie Region, including the Bates Hole/Shirley Basin Management Area and the South Central Management Area.



## Wyoming Local Sage-Grouse Working Groups - October 2007



0 15 30 60 90 Miles

Local Working Group Boundaries  
County Boundaries



## A long hunting tradition

Access Coordinator Jason Sherwood recently checked a hunter named Lydia Sullivan on the McFarlane Hunter Management Area. Sullivan, who is in her 80s, continues to hunt elk on the rocky, roadless portions of the HMA each year with some help from her son, Mike, and grandson, Sean.

As Sherwood accompanied her to some nearby HMA signs for a photo, Sullivan said she walks her dogs twice each day, "just to stay in shape for elk season!" Apparently the walks are worthwhile, as she still typically gets her elk each year.

## Crews plant willows and cottonwoods along Encampment River



Above: Crews plant willows along the bank of the Encampment River. Below: Aquatic habitat biologists assisted the Medicine Bow National Forest and Laramie County Conservation District with two stream crossing rehabilitation projects on Pole Mountain. The crossings were recently damaged by off-road use. The project involved installing fencing, willow cuttings and erosion matting.



Laramie Region Aquatic Habitat Biologist Christina Barrineau had help from the Laramie Habitat and Access crew and employees of Stantec to plant willows and cottonwoods on the Boykin Reach of the Encampment River habitat project.

The cobble rocks used to stabilize the river bank make it difficult for vegetation to grow, so biologists plant woody species to help hold soil in place. Native grasses should eventually establish in the cobble with adequate amounts of soil.

The crews planted the cottonwoods in plots made up of a 4-foot by 4-foot diamond pattern to encourage sediment deposition. Twelve plots were established at various locations within the project site. Blue plastic tubes are used to protect the vulnerable cottonwoods from depredation by deer and other ungulates, and Barrineau sprayed the willow plants with Plantskydd® in efforts to discourage browsing.

Barrineau also worked with Saratoga Habitat Biologist Katie Cheesbrough to kick off the Platte Valley Speaker Series in November. The first speaker was Lindsay Ciepiela, a graduate student at the University of Wyoming, who spoke on her research on estimating trout movement and use of tributary streams in the Upper North Platte Watershed.

About 25 people attended the presentation. Game and Fish will host a Speaker Series talk every other month in either Saratoga or Encampment to promote various habitat topics. Information can be found in future editions of this newsletter and online at [wgfd.wyo.gov](http://wgfd.wyo.gov).

## Bump Sullivan fishery is showing improvement

You need adequate amounts of water to support healthy fish populations and Bump Sullivan Reservoir is a perfect example.

The reservoir was essentially dry from the early 2000s to about 2009. Things started picking up again in 2010, and the reservoir has been full since 2013. In response to good water conditions, Game and Fish stocked large-mouth bass and channel catfish in the reservoir in 2014 to reestablish the fishery. More channel catfish were stocked in 2015.

The fish are growing nicely. Sampling in October turned up bass weighing 1 pound and measuring 12 inches. Bluegill were coming in at .10 pound and measuring 5 inches. Walleye have found their way into Bump Sullivan Reservoir from irrigation ditches, with some nice fish weighing more than 3 pounds and measuring over 21 inches. Channel catfish are also growing, with some measuring 14 inches and weighing .76 pound. "We're encouraged with the results," said Fisheries Biologist Lee McDonald. "A 10-inch bass in two to three years is good growth."

Biologists will continue to monitor the fishery in upcoming years. Channel catfish and black crappie are scheduled to be stocked in future years, and other species will access the lake from the supply ditches on their own. Habitat and Access crews have repaired the delivery ditches and Game and Fish has leased water to hopefully keep water levels adequate for continued development of this fishery.



## New furnace will keep crews warm

Habitat and Access Crew Leader Micah Morris installed a new furnace in the bunkhouse at the Wick/Beumee Wildlife Habitat Management Area.

Game and Fish Department personnel often stay at the bunkhouse while working on the WHMA. A separate building contains a cooking area and a bathroom with a shower.

The Wick/Beumee WHMA contains nearly 23,000 acres about six miles southeast of the town of Elk Mountain. Although managed primarily for elk, the area also supports mule deer, pronghorn antelope, blue grouse, sage grouse, cottontail rabbits, waterfowl, coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats and more. Three ponds and ten miles of stream provide fishing for rainbow, brook and brown trout.

## Hunting with the game warden

North Laramie Game Warden Kelly Todd spent a day hunting elk with 14-year-old Dillon Hanrahan.

The duo didn't find any elk, but Dillon was a trooper and with every ridge they came to he would get more excited. Warden Todd spent time reviewing hunter safety issues with the young man, and they talked about the fire that burned the area in 2012 and how it improved the forage for wildlife.



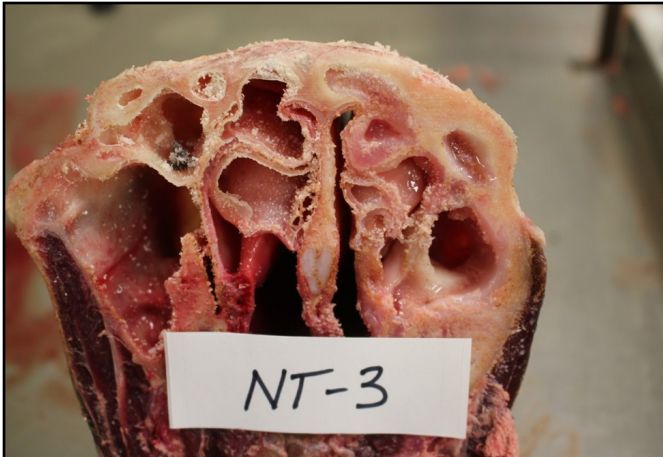
## Elk moving around Halleck Ridge

Elk Mountain Game Warden Ryan Kenneda reports good habitat conditions that should support plenty of elk in the Halleck Ridge area.

Elk in Hunt Area 125 usually start their trek to the winter range on Halleck Ridge around this time of year. By late November, 1,200 elk had crossed onto their winter range on part of the Elk Mountain Hunter Management Area.

Most of the elk harvest in this area takes place in December and January. With the amount of grass in the area, there should be adequate feed for the large herd of wintering elk.

The Elk Mountain Hunter Management Area (HMA) is located approximately 60 miles northwest of Laramie. It is comprised of private and leased lands of the Elk Mountain Ranch. For information on hunting the Elk Mountain Hunter Management Area, visit the Game and Fish Department website at [wgfd.wyo.gov](http://wgfd.wyo.gov).



Sinus tumor in a bighorn sheep from Hunt Area 1. Sinus tumors are evidenced by the thickened sinus walls on the right side.

## Bighorn sheep sinus tumors

Veterinary Services initiated a surveillance effort to survey for sinus tumors in the state's bighorn sheep herds. Collection kits were distributed to several taxidermists with a request that they save capped skulls so they could be examined for sinus tumors.

These tumors grow within the skull sinuses of the horns, forehead, and above the teeth, and have the ability to cause skull and horn deformities as well as potentially contribute to respiratory disease in the herd. Last year was the first time we documented nasal tumors in the state's bighorn sheep herds, when we found an affected ram from the Absaroka herd unit near Cody.

So far this year we have received a total of 18 skulls from hunt areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, and 22. Three skulls have strong evidence of sinus tumors; one from Hunt Area 1, one from 22, and one from an unknown hunt area.

## Young elk safely removed from fence

While placing signs on the boundary of the new Menter Knob Hunter Management Area, Access Coordinator Jason Sherwood came across an elk calf that had tangled its hind legs in the fence.

Sherwood safely removed the elk from the fence, and the animal ran away after a few minutes of catching its breath and regaining its bearings.

The Menter Knob Hunter Management Area is located north of the Palmer Canyon Road and west of the Cottonwood Park Road in Elk Area 7. It is comprised of private and leased lands of the EJ Medicine Bow Ranch.



## WGFD seeking bids for maintenance contractor in Platte Valley

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is seeking formal bids for a contractor to perform maintenance at Public Access Areas along the North Platte River in the Platte Valley.

This is a year-round contract. The successful bidder will be required to visit each Public Access Area weekly during high-use months, with less frequent visits in the off season. Some PAAs may require additional visits throughout the year depending on use. Duties include sweeping outhouses, stocking toilet paper, cleaning parking lot areas, painting, checking inlets at lakes, removing ice in winter, mowing and other duties. A complete list of duties can be found in the formal bid packet.

Persons interested in submitting a formal bid should contact the Laramie Game and Fish Office at (307) 745-4046. Interested persons have until Wednesday, Dec. 23 to respond.

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